

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Egypt: Amnesty International voices concern over pattern of reckless policing**

Against the backdrop of recent killings during police operations, Amnesty International deplores the increasing use of excessive force by police and security forces in Egypt when carrying out search operations, seeking to disperse protestors or patrolling the Egyptian borders, which have often led to deaths. The organization fears that this pattern of killings and excessive use of force will continue unless those responsible are brought to justice and clear instruction and adequate training is given to police and security forces.

The call by Amnesty International is made after two recent incidents demonstrated the reckless policing by Egyptian security forces. On 23 November, security forces killed a migrant as he attempted to cross the Egyptian border into Israel, bringing to the number of those killed at the border with Israel in 2008 to at least 26. On the same day, in Aswan, a police officer from the anti-drug squad shot and killed Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq at his home when the officer and two colleagues tried to search the house during a drug trafficking inquiry. Police officers came to the house of Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq searching for a drug dealer suspected of being at his home. Reportedly unarmed, Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq asked the police officers to show him the search warrant. The officers failed to produce the warrant, broke into the house and reportedly shot the owner of the house in the chest. On 24 November, the Aswan prosecution charged the three officers with “murder” for the death of Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq and “house breaking”, which they denied. The prosecution also ordered the detention of the police officer who allegedly killed Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq for four days pending further investigations. The other two police officers were released on bail.

After the shooting, the police officers took Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq to Aswan hospital but he died on his way. Angry protesters from his family and neighbours later gathered to call for those responsible for his death to be brought to justice. Protesters chanted slogans against the Minister of Interior and threw stones at the riot police and at hospital, smashing windows. Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas and used sticks in order to disperse hundreds of protestors. Yehya Abdel Megid Maghrabi, an elderly man in his sixties who lived nearby and who suffered from respiratory problems, died at his home as a result of inhaling tear gas, according to a medical report by a private doctor. No investigation into his death is known to have been ordered. . Many protestors were injured and about 50 were arrested and detained at Shallal central security forces camp near Aswan, where they were reportedly beaten. On 24 November, 27 of them were presented before the Aswan prosecution and charged with “gathering”, “rioting” and “damaging public property”. Five of them face the charge of “attempted murder” of a riot police officer. The others were released without charge.

These two incidents happened a month after Mervat Abdel Salam died after police officers raided her home in Samalut, Minya Governorate, and beat her during a robbery inquiry. Though pregnant and left bleeding, police officers were reported to have locked her in the house delaying medical assistance, and she was dead by the time she was taken to a doctor.

Amnesty International calls for an independent, impartial and thorough investigation into the deaths of Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq and of Yehya Abdel Megid Maghrabi as well as into allegations of excessive use of force by riot police during the protest. Such investigations are essential to ensure compliance by Egypt with its international obligations to protect fundamental human rights, and standards such as the United Nations Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions. The organization also calls on the authorities to investigate the allegations that those detained in Shallal central security forces camp were beaten.

Amnesty International reiterates its call on the Egyptian authorities to order investigations into killings of migrants, mainly from Sub-Saharan countries by security forces patrolling the Egyptian borders with Israel.

Unless clear instruction are issued by the Egyptian authorities to law enforcement agents and those responsible for such reckless shootings are held accountable, this pattern will become further entrenched said Amnesty International.

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